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The Committee.

The Speaker yesterday announced the result of nearly three weeks of harassing labor as ever before a public man. The task of making up committees in a new House is always onerous. But the perplexity is infinitely enhanced in a case like the present, where a party is returning to power after six years of minority, having a scant margin of superiority and, withal, densely overcrowded with would-be "leaders," whose ambition exceeds their capacity. We were not in favor of Gen. Keifer in the contest for the Speakership. We believed that he would be found lacking in legislative experience, and wanting in the tact of selection and distribution of men, which comes with long service in the House and close observation of its processes.

We were therefore prepared to see a list of committees that would both excite the criticism of the public and the discontent of the members themselves. But we frankly confess to disappointment. Gen. Keifer has indeed organized the House on a Republican basis. So far as distinctively partisan designs or measures were to be taken into account in the make-up of the committees to have charge of them, the Speaker has left no room for doubt as to his leanings. But that was to be expected, and is not a feature that we care to discuss. What interests us is the tendency of the organization of the House as a whole, with reference to general public topics likely to demand attention.

The Committee on Elections is Radically Republican. We hope it will not prove prospectively so. It will be called upon to handle a great many contested cases, mainly from the South; and the narrowness of the existing majority may tempt the committee to try the extreme remedy of indiscriminate ouster. If this policy is adopted the session will be instantly plunged into a partisan wrangle, the tendency of the Solid South to disintegrate will be arrested, and the rapidly growing Liberal or Independent element in the Democratic party will be overshadowed and stifled by the Bourbon wing, which, but for the prescriptions of old-time Radicalism, never would have existed. The present policy of the Republican party is to dissolve the solidarity of the South by the peaceful methods of political diplomacy. The former policy of force has long been disused and with the happiest results. It rests with the Elections Committee of the new House to say whether this successful policy shall continue or be reversed. The responsibility is a very great one, and Brother Calkins will do well to ponder it.

The Committee of Ways and Means is squarely Protectionist. This is as it should be. The Republican party won the election of which this House is one of the fruits by a direct appeal to the people on the question of Protection to American Labor, and Brother Keifer has simply done the square, usually thing in organizing a Committee of Ways and Means with unmistakable Protectionist tendencies. But he has not stopped with consolidating the strength of his own party on this issue in the make-up of his tariff committee. He has in addition divided the councils of the Opposition. We regard his sandwiching of Sam Randall between Tucker and Carlisle as a most skillful stroke of party strategy. Mr. Randall, representing a Protectionist constituency, has been the recognized leader of a Free Trade party for ten years. This anomalous attitude he has been able to maintain by dodging the record whenever the issue was presented. Keifer has at last nailed Mr. Randall down to the hard but fair fate of facing the music. He must now, as the boys say, either fish or cut bait. To corral Sam Randall in a corner where he can't dodge is of itself a feat which an older and wiler politician than Brother Keifer is might well be proud of. On the whole we consider the make-up of Ways and Means exceedingly adroit; calculated at once to develop the entire strength of the Republican party in favor of the protective principle, and to distract and demoralize the forces of the Democracy in opposition to it. We congratulate the Speaker on his skill.

Equal tact is apparent in the organization of the Committee on Appropriations. For some time a radical difference of policy has been growing up between the two parties on the subject of appropriations; the Republicans insisting on a broad, liberal system of public expenditure looking to the promotion of great popular or national interests, and the Democrats clinging to the old and narrow traditions of parsimony which, however appropriate to the state of things prevailing half a century ago, are absurdly obsolete and mischievous now. This difference of policy has been elevated during the past six years to the dignity of a political issue, and has been so recognized in at least two national campaigns—both favorable to the Republicans. The Speaker evidently had this question in all its bearings before him when he arranged the Committee on Appropriations. It is observed that the Republican representation is overwhelmingly Liberal. Of nine members of the majority on the committee, eight, including the chairman, are pronounced advocates of the broadest, widest liberality of public expenditure in all legitimate directions; while of the six Democrats, two, Blackburn and Le Fevre, are, to say the least, far in advance of the status of their party as expressed in the popular epithet of "Samrandallism," while a third, Ellis, has long held rank among the most enlightened and progressive legislators of any party. As for the ancient Democratic policy of parsimony, except Samrandallism, the Speaker has relegated it to the fond care of Father Atkins, who, having been Samrandall's faithful coadjutor in his four years' task of destroying the Democratic majority by inches, naturally falls heir to the bones of the

ceased. On the whole, the organization of this committee is calculated to bring out, in strongest relief, the antithesis which the professions of the Republican party offer to the practices of Democracy under the auspices of Samrandall. It will prove a most fortunate organization, and will reflect credit upon the Speaker, not only in the partisan, but in the widely-popular sense as well.

These three committees cover the three subjects of leading public importance. We say nothing at present of the Elections Committee, preferring to wait and see. But if the Speaker had consulted us as to the make-up of Ways and Means and Appropriations, we could not have suggested an improvement—that is to say, viewing the matter from the Speaker's standpoint.

There is one other committee which will have to deal with a subject of vast importance and extreme delicacy, and which has been organized with gratifying strength. This is the Pensions Committee, of which the genial and gifted Tom Browne is chairman. This committee will be confronted at the outset with the intricate and perplexing problem of devising a practicable scheme to arrest the enormous frauds that are being piled in upon the Treasury under the loose and bungling arrears of pensions act, invented as a vote-trap by the 45th Democratic House. The Democrats did not catch the desired votes in this trap, but a multitude of rogues all over the country have used it to catch a great many millions of Uncle Sam's dollars. Tom Browne is the right kind of man to tackle such a difficult and dangerous problem. Perfectly fearless, conscientious and straightforward, he will go about his work regardless alike of the abuse of newspapers and the clamor of demagogues. He is booked for a liberal share of both, but we have no doubt that he will calmly proceed, in conjunction with his able colleagues on the committee, and his equally courageous coadjutor, the Commissioner of Pensions, to root out the system of frauds and impositions that, unless arrested promptly, bids fair to swamp the Treasury.

We have neither time nor space for a detailed review of the other committees. Suffice to say that in general they are the best that could be made with the material at hand. The Speaker has done well; infinitely better than his friends could have hoped and out of all description better than his opponents wished. He has developed to an astonishing degree qualities which rank foremost among the qualifications of a Speaker—to wit, a good nature, which seems exhausted, and a patience which, during the wear and worry of the past three weeks, has often risen to the plane of the heroic. The dissatisfaction of individuals will rapidly give place to the acquiescence of all, and we confidently predict that the Speaker's work will grow in the public favor as it shall be tested in actual legislation.

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